(d) and (e) The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000 proposes to induct a new provision in the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 for non-captive coal and lignite mining as well as exploration of coal and lignite resources by the Indian companies. The proposal does not involve privatisation of any of the existing coal mines of Coal India Limited or of Singareni Collieries Comipany Limited (SCCL).

Negative Growth Rate of Coal

4043. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coal production showed a negative growth rate of minus five per cent for the year 1999-2000;

(b) whether this has resulted in the import of coal from other countries; and

(c) if so, what Government's views are on this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. SHRIMATI RITA VERMA) : (a) No, Sir. The all India coal production during the year 1999-2000 is of the order 299.00 million tonnes (Provisional) against the production of 292.27 million tonnes during the year 1998-99, showing a growth of 2.3%.

(b) and (c) As indicated in the reply to part (a) of the question, the year 1999-2000 did not witness negative growth in coal production. Coal import is however resorted to by consumers on grounds of price consideration at certain locations, calorific value and quality considerations.

Losses incurred by CCL

4044. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Coalfields Ltd. has been incurring losses;

(b) if so, since when and the amount of losses sustained by CCL annually;

(c) whether CCL was earning profit in the past;

(d) if so, why the CCL is incurring losses now; and

(e) the steps taken to improve the efficiency of CCL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR.(SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (c) Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) has been posting losses since 1994-95. The year-wise annual losses of CCL are as under:

Year	CCL losses in Rs./crore
1994-95	118.96
1995-96	1.43
1996-97	15.52
1997-98	85.67
1998-99	148.35

Before 1994-95 CCL was earning profit. The year-wise annual profit of CCL during the period from 1989-90 to 1994-95 was as under :

Year	CCL profit in Rs./crore
1989-90	10.76
1990-91	5.26
1991-92	103.77
1992-93	41.58
1993-94	62.08

(d) The main reasons for CCL losses are as under :—

(i) Share of production from low grade reserves has increased against the high grade reserves resulting in adverse product-mix.

(ii) On account of write off/adjustment against old sundry debtors during the last three years amounting to about Rs. 215 crores the company had to post losses.

(iii) On account of delay in land acquisition, forest land clearance and rehabilitation of villages, the workable coal reserves got depleted. As a result coal production could not be made good.

(iv) Production of medium coking coal got reduced on account of depletion of workable reserves which resulted in under-utilization of washeries.

(v) Seven areas in CCL have old and less productive mines with large work force. This adverse "production manpower" ratio is affecting profitability of the company.

(vi) Adverse age profile of Heavy Earth Moving Machine (HEMM) in CCL on account of high number of older equipment resulted in poor availability and utilization. This situation has led to low productivity of the equipment.

(vii) Uneconomic underground mines of CCL have high incidence of manpower.

(c) The following steps are being taken to improve the efficiency of CCL—

(i) Thrust is being given to develop new mines like Jharkand Opencast and Topa Opencast and also diversion of Phusro-Jharangdih rail line which will improve not only product-mix but also increase in coking coal productions thereby improving the capacity utilization of the washeries.

(ii) By focusing attention on matters like rehabilitation, land acquisition and forest clearance, specially for the World Bank projects, the mines are being completed within the scheduled time frame.

(iii) Corrective steps are being taken to improve the age profile of HEMM by giving thrust on replacement of HEMM equipment during the current year as well as terminal year of the IX Plan. This will result in improved availability and utilization of equipments. In fact, the capacity utilisation which was around 60% three years earlier has now gone up to about 79% in 1999-2000.

(iv) Steps are being taken to close some of the most uneconomic and unviable mines and also reorganisation/restructuring of existing uneconomic mines so that production and productivity is increased in those mines.

(v) Thrust has been given to reduce manpower through Voluntary Retirement Scheme as well as re-deployment of manpower in a planned manner by imparting training as well as upgradation of skill of the existing workers.

(vi) Steps are also being taken to improve the production by opening of new mines either through lease finance or by joint venture.

Foreign Participation in Coal Sector

4045. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that it has been decided to re-open coal mining cent per cent to the private sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether foreign participation will be permitted in the coal sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of the answer to part (a) of the question.

(c) to (e) Foreign companies are not permitted to do coal mining in the country. However, foreign investment in Indian companies generating power, producing cement and iron & steel, which are engaged in coal mining for captive consumption, is permitted.

Hindi Typewriters in the Ministry

†4046. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of offices under his ministry/department where not a single Hindi typewriter is available until now;

(b) the reasons for not putting demands for Hindi typewriters in these offices until now; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.